

Conflict of Interest/Outside Activities Policy



Gordon State College

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to increase the awareness of faculty and staff of the potential of conflicts of interest and commitments, and to establish procedures for identifying, reviewing, and managing such relationships to help assure the integrity of college endeavors. While the spirit of this policy is to foster open and complete disclosure, its intent is not to discourage the participation of college employees in activities that serve to benefit the interests of the participants and the college.

Policy

All full time Gordon State College employees are expected to devote their primary professional loyalty, time and energy to the programs of the college. A conflict of interest occurs when the time devoted to external activities adversely affects a full time college employee's capacity to meet the responsibilities of his/her position. The specific responsibilities and professional activities that constitute an appropriate commitment will differ across departments, but they should be based on a general understanding between the full time college employee and his/her supervisor.

Employees shall make every reasonable effort to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. An appearance of conflict exists when a reasonable person will conclude from the circumstances that the employee's ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by personal interest. An appearance of conflict can exist even in the absence of a legal conflict of interest.

An employee of Gordon State College should avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest between his or her college obligations and his or her outside activities. A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination.

Outside Activities are defined as:

Occupational

Gordon State College employees shall not engage in any occupation, pursuit, or endeavor which will interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties. All full time faculty, administrators, and other professional staff members employed by Gordon State College are expected to give full professional effort to their assignments of teaching, research, and service.

Professional employees are encouraged to participate in professional activity that does not interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties provided the activity meets one of the following criteria:

- is a means of personal professional development
- serves the community, state, or nation
- is consistent with the objectives of the institution

For all activities, except single-occasion activities, the employee should report in writing through the official channels the proposed arrangements and secure the approval of the President or his or her designee, prior to engaging in the activities. Such activities include consulting, teaching, speaking, and participating in business or service enterprises.

Consulting

Recognizing that teaching, research, and public service are the primary responsibilities of Gordon State College faculty members, it shall be considered reasonable and desirable for faculty members to engage in consulting activities, which are defined for the purposes of this policy as any additional activity beyond duties assigned by the institution, professional in nature and based in the appropriate discipline for which the individual receives additional compensation during the contract year.

For all activities, except single-occasion activities, the employee should report in writing through the official channels the proposed arrangements and secure the approval of the President or his/her designee, prior to engaging in the activities. A pre-approved plan authorized by the President or his/her designee must be in place prior to the use of college personnel, facilities, equipment and/or materials. Gordon State College shall be reimbursed rates consistent with rates charged outside groups or persons.

Political

As responsible and interested citizens in a democratic society, employees of Gordon State College are encouraged to fulfill their civic obligations and otherwise engage in the normal political processes of society. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate for college employees to manage or enter political campaigns while on duty to perform services for the college or to hold elective political office at the state or federal level while employed by the college. Therefore, the following policies governing political activities are hereby adopted:

- Employees may not manage or take an active part in a political campaign which interferes with the performance of duties or services for which he or she receives compensation from the college.
- Employees may not hold elective political office at the state or federal level.
- A candidate for or holder of an elective political office at the state or federal level may not be employed or hold a faculty, staff, or other position at Gordon State College, with or without compensation.
- Employees seeking elective political office at the state or federal level must first request a leave of absence without pay beginning prior to qualification as a candidate in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. If elected to state or federal office such person must resign prior to assuming office.
- Employees may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level, or appointive office, when such candidacy for or holding of the office does not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to Gordon State College.

Procedure

Prior to engaging in any outside activity, as defined by the policy, an employee must secure approval from his or her immediate supervisor and submit an Outside Employment Authorization Form to the Vice President of his or her department for approval. The form can be located at the following link: <http://www2.gordonstate.edu/humanresources/policies>. The President or his/her designee is the final approving authority for all outside activities.